

Greek American Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

With

Poula Koulos

April 5, 2006
Sacramento, CA

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Greek American Oral History Project

Interview History for Oral History of
Koula Poulos

Interviewer's Name: Viridiana Diaz

Interview Date and Location: The interview was conducted on April 5, 2006, in Mrs. Poulos' home in Sacramento, California.

Context Notes: Mrs. Poulos is an immigrant from Greece. During the interview, she was very emotional to share her experience as an immigrant. In the beginning, she seemed surprised at the recording equipment and showed concern and nervousness about participating in the project; however, she agreed to cooperate. In two occasions, the telephone rings and the second time Mrs. Poulos answered the phone while the tape player was still recording. She had a brief conversation in Greek with her son.

Mrs. Poulos was a very sensitive and emotional narrator. In several occasions, she began to cry especially when she spoke about her deceased husband. She speaks with a heavy accent and at times it is difficult to understand the narration. Even though I contacted her after the interview to clarify spelling, I was unable to understand many of the clarifications. Regardless of the heavy accent, she offered detail and complete answers to most questions. She also had the habit of saying, "for instance" constantly throughout the interview.

Tape and Interview Records: The original tape recording of the interview and a full transcript are held by the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation in Sacramento. Copies of the recording and transcripts are deposited with the Department of Special Collections and University Archives at California State University, Sacramento.

[Session 1, April 5, 2006]

[Begin Tape 1, Side A]

DIAZ: We are going to be doing the interview portion for the Oral History of Sacramento Greek Community Project. It is a pleasure for me to be here, thank you for having me in your home. And, I do want to begin by asking you about your background, and where you were born and when.

POULOS: I come from Greece from the mid of Greece, a couple of hours north from Athens, my hometown is Eretria (phonetic) the name, the mountain is Parnassus (phonetic) and we have everything, school, high school, banks, everything.

DIAZ: So, it is a pretty developed city?

POULOS: Oh, yes.

DIAZ: Okay, and when is it that you were you born?

POULOS: April 22, 1923. As a matter of fact, this month I was born, this April, I come from a large family, my father, my mother, we are three brothers and three sisters, and my uncles and my brothers and everybody they are mechanics. They make flour, cottons any things like that. So, I grew up and went to school over there.

So, the way we marry, my husband come to Greece and then somebody said, "Koula you going to America, somebody come from America," and I say "yes," I said right away and then we decide to marry and I marry in Greece with my husband, and

then I stay three months because he did not have papers, he had to get it.

DIAZ: He had to come back?

POULOS: Yes, he came back to America and send me the papers. I work through the law, by the law, doctors and everything, shots, and I come after three months. And I come from New York, then I come from San Francisco, then we buy the house, he had restaurant, the restaurant was on J and H street. A lot of Greek people in Sacramento.

DIAZ: Tell me about your memories of Greece? Like, what do you remember the most?

POULOS: I remember the town that I grew up, the mountains, picnics for instance, we had a nice quite life. Not like here, Americans.

DIAZ: Not as fast. It is fast pace.

POULOS: Not fast.

DIAZ: How did your parents earn a living? I know you said your brothers were mechanics?

POULOS: My parents, my father, my brothers, my uncles, some people are farmers, but most are mechanics, we had factory, they make flour, mill, things like that.

DIAZ: When you move to the United States did you think it was a permanent move or did you think it was temporary?

POULOS: No, I knew it was permanent. And then I have son. In 1951,

Thanksgiving day, in 1951, I arrive.

DIAZ: How did you feel about leaving Greece?

POULOS: I really don't know because it was meant to be here in America. Of course I missed my family. I write everyday and they write to me and after ten years, when my son it was 10 years old we take trip to Greece, the whole family. My husbands has brothers and sisters over there, family, and it was a very nice trip really.

DIAZ: But it took ten years before you went back?

POULOS: Yes, yes.

DIAZ: And what was your impression going back to Greece after 10 years?

POULOS: It's different.

DIAZ: It was different.

POULOS: Wow, very much different.

DIAZ: In what way?

POULOS: Well, everything. America is different country. America, everything here easy. Over there, of course, I grew up in not small village for instance, we had everything, we didn't suffer for instance for food and for things like that and I enjoy over there and I enjoy here. Because that's the meaning when you marry you going to establish to make family. I made my family here.

DIAZ: That was what you came here for and that is what you did.

POULOS: That's it. I come to make family.

DIAZ: How did your parent feel about you coming to the states and leaving Greece?

POULOS: Well, from the beginning, it was so fast my wedding. Even in one month engage and then I left after three months.

DIAZ: So it was very fast.

POULOS: Very fast. They don't like it.

DIAZ: But they were supportive?

POULOS: Yes, yes, oh yes.

DIAZ: What was your impression of the U.S. before you moved? What were you expecting the U.S. to look like?

POULOS: I expect like the way I find out.

DIAZ: Really?

POULOS: Because America has good name over there. America oh, America everything, like something dream. That's it, we thought. Oh, you are going to go to America, oh, wish I was going to America, that's what everybody say. They like to come to America. Now they don't like it.

DIAZ: So now, it has change, that impression. Interesting.

POULOS: Changed, yes.

DIAZ: What were some of the feelings that you had the day you left Greece? That day that you left, any feelings that you had?

POULOS: Feelings I say, "I don't know how long I am going to be to

that country I am going now, or if I come back.” I didn’t know it.

If I come back there. But after 10 years, I went back there.

DIAZ: But where you sad, or were you excited?

POULOS: Excited and sad, both.

DIAZ: A combination.

POULOS: But when I come here, I find people and the church first of all, it was people and they have organization here in Sacramento, organize the people it was big organizations like HEPA, like I belong to GAPA (G. A. P. A.) Greek American Progressive Association. And it was from Peloponnesus (phonetic) people, because Greece do you have an idea, the map of Greece, okay, we have the north, up to the Solonika (phonetic) and down here Greeti (phonetic) right there, I find from all over the Greece people here. And they are very friendly.

DIAZ: Very.

POULOS: Very friendly, and the church organize picnics and it was pleasure the life here in America.

DIAZ: So, did you immediately feel like this was your new home?

POULOS: Yes, I think yes. They ask me you like it here? “Yes, I like it.” Because some people they don’t like it, a lot of people. I used to have cousin, I call her, and she married she come over here, after four years she left here. She didn’t come here. She left. But I said I am not going to move, that’s my house here, I like it. I enjoy

very much here.

DIAZ: What do you remember about your travel to the United States, that journey, that trip, what do you remember.

POULOS: Well, it was night when I come. But when I come to New York, it was fascinated, everything I saw and the food over there, we stay the airport for instance and then we take another plane come to San Francisco, we stay over night to San Francisco, then we come here to Sacramento, my husband come and pick me up. Yes.

DIAZ: That sounds like a nice trip. What things did you bring with you on the your journey and trip, what did you bring from Greece?

POULOS: I bring a lot of things; I bring clothes, blankets, for instance, things like that, whatever you use. Yeah, blankets, table cloths, embroider things.

DIAZ: Did you bring any food? At all?

POULOS: Food? No food, I don't remember to bring food.

DIAZ: Okay, so mainly things, useful things.

POULOS: Yes, useful things, for the house for instance.

DIAZ: What was your family's economic condition in Greece? I know you said we were comfortable, you had everything.

POULOS: Yeah, we are not poor, we were middle class people, we had everything, even World War II we did not suffer, because we have mechanic things, we had the factory who made the wheat, they make flour, you know mill, and then we not hungry, some people

suffer, of starvation, World War II people died, not my family.

DIAZ: Did you go to school when you came to Sacramento?

POULOS: When I come to Sacramento, I went to school right there in N street.

DIAZ: Is that uh . . .

POULOS: For the people who come from other countries. Yes, I went three, four months and then I become pregnant and I didn't go anymore.
[Laugh]

DIAZ: But did you learn some English during the time you went to school or did you learn your English by just being in Sacramento?

POULOS: Just by talk, being in Sacramento.

POULOS: And I don't feel shame to talk about. That is my pronunciation. That's me, that's the way I talk, if I was young and I go to school I'm going to have the pronunciation like the kids. A lot of kids come from Greece, and they go to school, and you don't know they are foreigners. But for me I didn't go to school from young, I went right away to school, and then with neighbors, I tried to talk, I tried to read, I had a dictionary, things like that.

DIAZ: Television, did that help?

POULOS: Yes, the television, that is the way.

DIAZ: That is good.

DIAZ: Did you know any English before, in Greece did you study English?

POULOS: No, I have a book over there. In three months, what I can learn. And then when I come and my husband has the restaurant I know "if you please give me glass of water?" that's all I say and he was so surprised [laugh]. A little, I just, I learn, just, I pick up, I pick up the language.

DIAZ: Yeah, and your English is very well.

POULOS: [Laugh].

DIAZ: I know you mentioned that you came here because your husband was already living here.

POULOS: Yes, my husband was older than I was, my husband was older than I was.

DIAZ: Okay, now is he also Greek?

POULOS: Greek, oh, like Sacramento and North Sacramento. That's far away our towns are in Greece. My hometown it was Sacramento for instance and his like north Sacramento. Just very close. Not far away. But people know me and they know my husband and they say "Koula are you going to America to marry Luis?" for instance, and I say "yes," right away.

DIAZ: So, how long had you known him?

POULOS: How long?

DIAZ: Yes, your husband?

POULOS: Wednesday, my brother we have truck, we have, automobile, and then we say we have to see each other because they talk to me if I

come to America and it is this man from America from West Sacramento for instance, "you like to?" And I say "yes." "But you have to see him and he has to see you." Okay, we went my brother and the lady and her husband, we went to my husband's hometown and it was his family over there and we met like we met right now, like you, and they say, "okay." What do you think Koula? "That's okay" I say, okay, marry Luis, Luis his name and Luis says, "well if Koula wants to come to America, I am not going to stay here in Greece, I am going to go back to America, she likes to come?" And I say "yes" right away, he left and that's it.

DIAZ: So probably just a few days.

POULOS: A few days. He said, "okay we are going to come." He saw me Wednesday and Saturday they come to my house, his brother, his nephew, the priest, the cousin, everybody and I was surprise and I say "we are going to the ladies house to talk if I want," no, they come to my house, and say "okay they come to finish." That's it.

DIAZ: Was that common? Is that how most people got married?

POULOS: Yeah, common, that's the way, my sister, that's the way, the other sister, that's the way. Even my brothers, even when I went after 10 years over there it was one of my brothers not married and the other one and say "what is wrong?" Hey Koula "we have two-three girls you know, and then they finish, you know, they engage,

that's the way.

They didn't go from teenagers to go hide and then live together and they don't marry. Not those kinds of things.

DIAZ: Not back then.

POULOS: Not back then. Oh, no.

DIAZ: Now, how old were you?

POULOS: I was 27 [laugh] and my husband was almost 60. He was old.

DIAZ: He was older.

POULOS: But he was a good man and kind man. Very good man, very good man really [emotional].

DIAZ: That is wonderful.

DIAZ: What do you miss the most about Greece?

POULOS: My family of course, my family, my brothers.

DIAZ: Has any of your family moved, ever since?

POULOS: Oh, they come, my brother come when my son got married, my oldest brother come with his wife to the wedding. And I have nephew here because he is going to school and then my niece comes from there. Yes, I have relatives over here and I have Luis's, my husband's relatives here, and I find Luis's cousin here in America with his family. I find him.

DIAZ: So your family has definitely extended here?

POULOS: Yes, uh-huh.

DIAZ: What difficulties did you experience adjusting to American

life? What was the hardest part of it? I know mostly you had a positive experience but was there something that you though was difficult to adjust to?

POULOS: It was, I had everything. Like you see the house, god bless its soul [cries]. He buy the house, with the furniture, everything, nothing old, very few people have that [emotional].

DIAZ: Very lucky. Okay, your siblings, it sounds like you said you have a son.

POULOS: Yes.

DIAZ: Do you have any other...

POULOS: I have my son and he is married. He lives in Salinas because his wife from Salinas. They have two kids. That's my son and his wife right there and that's one of the kids up there [points to photos].

DIAZ: Oh, very handsome kids.

POULOS: They grown now. I have the pictures, look, that's Demitra (phonetic) [point to photo].

DIAZ: Oh, yeah, they are not babies anymore [laugh].

POULOS: Not babies, that's Alexander, his birthday a year, you know the food festival, they dance, the Greek kids they dance, that's Demitra (phonetic), in Monterrey the Greek food festival, the church over there they live they have in Monterrey. And that's Demitra (phonetic), that's my granddaughter.

- DIAZ: Here name is Demitra (phonetic)?
- POULOS: Yes, Demitra (phonetic).
- DIAZ: Beautiful name.
- POULOS: Yes. And that's Demitra (phonetic). And that's me with Alexander in Christmas time we make, balls, chocolate balls and then with Alexander and look what he did [emotional laugh].
- DIAZ: And that is here in your home? That's in their home.
- POULOS: No, in Salinas, in their home. That is the latest pictures. I have two grandchildren.
- DIAZ: So, they were raised with Greek traditions?
- POULOS: Yes, they going, as a matter of fact, right now, they are going to Boston, because the church Alexander it was in the altar, and they take the alter boys, the parents, they are going group of people right now they are going to live tonight they are going to Boston in the headquarters and they are going to have meetings and they are going come back Sunday.
- DIAZ: Oh, how nice.
- POULOS: We baptize the kids, and they marry Greek, my son, you know, but Greek orthodox, yeah we baptize the kids in the church, in this church.
- DIAZ: Was it really important for you that your son marry Greek?
- POULOS: She is not Greek but she is very good. No, her father is Italian, it was Italian and her mother American but she is a nice girl, nice.

Well they met, you know, like here American style, you know. I did said whatever was the lucky for Jimmy for my son, you know, a lot of Greek people said okay Jimmy, but no Greek girl. A lot of American girls a lot of Greek girls marry American boys or American girls.

But she is nice, she is good mother, we understand each other you know what I mean because she is America but I love her. We have good family, really. And now, they are in San Jose to go back to Boston, in the headquarters. And she is helping the church and Jimmy is in the church help a lot, and in Easter I am going over there in Salinas because they have.

DIAZ: For Easter, the holiday? How nice.

POULOS: Yes.

DIAZ: So, how did you raise your son, did he go to Greek school?

POULOS: Yes, I teach him, I teach him at home, I teach him at home.

Jimmy can write, when it is birthdays I write cards and I send them and he read them. And even the kids when they came over I put them and they write Greek and read, and everything. Jimmy can speak Greek very nice, yeah, I teach him, I teach him at home.

DIAZ: That is great, because that is very difficult now days.

POULOS: Yes it is, but we try.

DIAZ: And it is difficult to be consistent.

POULOS: We have Greek school right here, and the kids, the Greek kids over there in our church, they do excellent. We have Greek teacher and the kids learn Greek, and they have sports, they have basketball team, they, we have the monastery down in St. Nicholas Ranch and they go for summer camps, its very nice, the Greek community here in, we have three communities, three churches here is Sacramento, we have St. Catherine in Elk Grove, and we have another one St. Anna in...

DIAZ: Is it in Sacramento also?

POULOS: No, in, the little town outside from Sacramento.

DIAZ: Folsom?

POULOS: Yes, yeah.

DIAZ: They are growing. It is a large community.

POULOS: They are growing and every community, every, especially San Francisco has more churches and more people, more people.

DIAZ: My best friend, she is actually Serbian, but she went to Greek school her whole life.

POULOS: Really? She's orthodox?

DIAZ: She is.

POULOS: She speaks the language?

DIAZ: Yes.

POULOS: That's good.

DIAZ: And she marry also a Caucasian man but she is trying to teach her

kids Greek as well.

POULOS: Here in Sacramento.

DIAZ: Here in Sacramento.

POULOS: What's her name?

DIAZ: Anna and her last name is Koval.

POULOS: I don't know.

DIAZ: Her family's last name is Popovac.

POULOS: Popovac. No, I don't know. A lot of Greek people, you don't know there is a lot of Greek people, is big, I mean, big community here in Sacramento we have three churches.

DIAZ: Now that we are talking about school, what did you remember school like in Greece, how far did you go to school?

POULOS: Well, I went to high school, I did not finish high school, I went and I enjoy.

DIAZ: Did you like high school in Greece?

POULOS: Yes, yes.

DIAZ: Okay. How active were you in school? Were you involved?

POULOS: Oh, yes. I was athlete. (Phonetic) I went and like you are going to from small town, I went for instances like you go to (phonetic) I was very athletic I earn test.

DIAZ: What other kinds of sports did you do?

POULOS: I was strong that time, nothing more we just had exercise all the time.

DIAZ: Good. As a child, with your family did you have certain shores,

jobs that you had to do within the home, that you were responsible for?

POULOS: Well you helped in the house, for instance, and the kids' croshay and had work to do...

DIAZ: The girls?

POULOS: Yes, the girl, the girls and we make by hand things and in the school they teach the kids, mean the girls had to learn something.

DIAZ: Who were your closest friends as a kid and what do you remember about this person?

POULOS: Ah, [long silence].

DIAZ: Did you have a lot of friends?

POULOS: All in the neighborhoods, there was too many, we went to school, and then (phonetic), (phonetic), (phonetic), (phonetic), so many names, we don't fight as a matter of fact, I am not a fight person, no, I like to dance, I like to play, I like to sing, things like that.

DIAZ: Is dancing common around kids?

POULOS: Yes, back home.

DIAZ: Do they all get involved.

POULA: In the school, the boys play marbles in the recess and the girls dancing or play (phonetic), yeah, that the way it is.

DIAZ: How nice and healthy. Did you parents have rules in your home and were they strict?

POULOS: It was strict, not very, because it was nice family, everyone was

very happy. My brother play violin, we like to sing, my father has beautiful voice, and I like to sing, we had nice life and family, like your mid family, that's it.

DIAZ: What were your dreams as a young girl, like when you were still a girl, what was your dream?

POULOS: [Long silence].

Not special. Like, like my family, like my family. I was very pleased with the way I raised, and I think that's the way I am now. Yeah, I have good family, I don't have very many kids but my son is very nice to me, my daughter in law, and I have lots of friends here in Sacramento, I love people, really and very responsible [phone rings].

DIAZ: [Laugh]. Do you want to answer, and I can stop, or, and then we can come back?

POULOS: I can answer with the machine.

DIAZ: Okay. Now, we are going to talk about the Greek community here in Sacramento. Was there a Greek neighborhood or a concentration of Greek businesses here in Sacramento when you arrived? [phone rings].

POULOS: It was uhmm, it was restaurant, and let's see, restaurant, Legatos (phonetic) had restaurant, my husband had restaurant like I told you, 7th and coffee shop, (phonetic) on Stockton Boulevard it was restaurant, and downtown it was Café Neo (phonetic) used to have

Café Neo (phonetic) and all the bachelors, it was lots of bachelors when they come here, they walk down K street all over, and they had Café Neo, and they going and they pass the time, they play cards, they had cup of coffee, Greek coffee, things like that, it was very nice.

The Greek people they organize together, from (phonetic) I told you, they have organization, they have the meeting and every summer we have picnics, we used to go to Elk Grove, we used to go to old State Fair grounds, in Stockton Boulevard, and we prepare food, and we prepare sweets, Greek sweets, and we had tickets, and we had music, and then bring phonographer that time and then bring the phonographer and everybody dance, and very nice really.

DIAZ: So, very social?

POULOS: Very, in the hall, really in the Greek community right there in the hall, we celebrate Independence Day 25 of March, the people, the boys wear the customs for instance (phonetic), and the girls and they have the flag; bring it, nice, really.

I remember Penny, Penny when I come, Penny sing on the stage and it was her mother and father right there, Penny was very nice girl when I come, she was student, and she sing the one song, and then they say, "Penny, you gonna sing another one, and she

said well I am going to ask my mother to see what she is going to say," and she sing Mrs. Lue, Mrs. Lue, that is the song.

DIAZ: That was the song?

POULOS: Penny is nice, and her mother and father it was nice family, really, all the Greek people, they act like families.

DIAZ: Was your family back in Greece also very involved with the church?

POULOS: Yeah, everybody going to church, yes, yes, everybody going to church, they baptize for instance everybody. And we have monastery outside from the town for instance and we celebrate one for instance, once when is the (phonetic) for instance, August the 6th, and names day, (phonetic) day, the Greek people celebrate the name day when I come here I find out people celebrate the birthdays, back homes we didn't celebrate the birthdays, we celebrate the name day, Saint. (phonetic), Saint. (phonetic), Saint. (phonetic) . . .

DIAZ: And no birthdays?

POULOS: No, not very much in my days, no birthdays, even the people they don't know when they born, honest to god [laugh].

DIAZ: Oh, that is different.

POULOS: It is different, I was surprise. But here, every body, used to have friend, a neighbor, and he say "you know what Mrs. Poulos is my birthday today," and I used to say to my husband "that's Mr. Green

birthday.” It was something else, birthday, the main figure here in America, not back home.

DIAZ: Okay, so, does that mean that everybody has the name of a saint?

POULOS: Yes, that is right, that is correct, yes.

DIAZ: That makes sense.

POULOS: Even here in Sacramento long time ago when they come people celebrate the name day and we used to go okay that is your name day and I have new years day, my name in St. (phonetic) and they there come here and sing and song, and full of food, things like that, not birthday just name day, back home.

DIAZ: Interesting. But do you know like how old you are? You knew that you are 20 or 30.

POULOS: Oh, yeah, well [laugh].

DIAZ: So you keep track of years, you just don’t celebrate [laugh].

POULOS: That’s it [laugh].

DIAZ: So it would probably be easy to like forget a year or two.

POULOS: Even I though I born in March and I had to check the social security, I check social security, I say to the social security, “I need birth certificate, well I come from Greece,” I sent to Greece for my birth certificate and I did not born in March I born in April [laugh].

DIAZ: Well you were close, good thing [laugh].

POULOS: That’s the way.

DIAZ: So did you belong to the HEPA or the GAPA?

POULOS: GAPA, I belong to GAPA and I am secretary. [Laugh]

DIAZ: Oh, okay so you are active?

POULOS: I were all my life in the organization, HEPA is Greek organization, and GAPA is Greek American Progressive Association, we belong to GAPA and do picnics, the other day we had brownie sale, we sell sweets too at the Greek hall and we make very good money, we help people, we give to the church money, we send, when Athens has the earthquake we send money and some poor people, we didn't say who they are if they need we help, yeah, is very good, really.

DIAZ: And it feels good to give.

POULOS: That's right.

DIAZ: What is the biggest difference between the two organizations?

POULOS: Oh, well, the Greek, the GAPA you have to be Greek Orthodox, if you, for instance, I am Greek, my husband is Greek, Jimmy is Greek boy, my son, for instance, he's wife is not Greek but she marry, she baptize, she's marry Greek boy, that's the difference, but they both organizations, big organizations and they do the best, yes.

DIAZ: Okay.

POULOS: The HEPA take a lot of people from different, ethnic, I mean not only Greek, in America, but GAPA you have to be orthodox and you have to baptize and you have to, we speak the Greek language.

DIAZ: So you would say that the GAPA is a little more traditional and then HEPA would be little bit more Americanize because it is open to other people that marry Greek or became Greek.

POULOS: But the HEPA has in Greece hospitals and help people and everything, big organization, nice, but it happens to be my husband GAPA and then I belong to GAPA, but I love GAPA, GAPA is all my friends.

DIAZ: Nice, okay, and you say they organize all kinds of activities.

POULOS: Yes.

DIAZ: Okay, okay, I know you already told me a little bit about how you met your husband, but anything else you want to add about how you met him?

POULOS: I told you [laugh].

DIAZ: [Laugh] that's the story, huh, because it was very quick.

Okay, now you said your husband was Greek, now, did he belong already to the Greek church here, he was involved?

POULOS: Oh yes, he was, he give money, in donations, oh, yes.

DIAZ: He was very involved already.

Okay, was it really important for your family to marry Greek?

POULOS: Yes, yes, oh yeah, the Greek people, the boys, I like my Jimmy to marry Greek girl, but it didn't happen, that's the way we believe, but it did not come, because it's different years now, the kids have

different lives, it's too modern, I think too modern, back home we didn't have strange people, half of the town is cousins and nephews and cousins because they stay right there.

Here, the kids going to school, and they met the girl and then that's the hard talks that time so they marry that girl who loves.

DIAZ: Was it hard for you to enforce that you maintain those Greek traditions when your son was growing up here in America?

POULOS: No, because he got along.

DIAZ: He liked it?

POULOS: Oh yes, he likes it, that's the way.

DIAZ: Good, because I am sure some kids rebel and don't want to, so, but it didn't happen.

POULOS: No, from the beginning, yeah, no, they say no because they like to play, I say "Jimmy come on I am going to teach little bit lessons (phonetic), "Mama I am busy, I have to go mama", that's all he said, "just half an hour, look the time, look the time, just", I told him like that and I had the books and he speaks the Greek language.

DIAZ: And you spoke to him in Greek all the time?

POULOS: In Greek, yes.

DIAZ: And your husband did too?

POULOS: Yes, most of the time, the mothers. When I come from Greece all

my friends the boys and the girls speak Greek. But Jimmy's kids now, Demitria (phonetic) and Alexander they can't do it because the mother is American doesn't not know the language, Jimmy's works all day long, that's the problem.

But when people come from Greece and marry here, the women special that's the force generation all of them speak Greek, the boys, after that, after that, no more people come, no women come from Greece to live in America, they come, they don't like it, they go back home.

DIAZ: So is key that the woman comes...

POULOS: The women teach the kids, the child Greek..

DIAZ: And raises the kids and teaches them.

POULOS: Raise the kids Greek, that's it. Other wise, you can, you take, okay, the kids go to school, but when they come home the mother does not speak Greek, how are they going to talk the language?

DIAZ: How are they going to practice?

POULOS: That's it.

DIAZ: True, and it's not like there is a lot of Greek television or...

POULOS: [Laugh].

DIAZ: Yeah, uh-hum, okay, any conflicts between American culture of your children and the Greek identity?

POULOS: What do you mean?

DIAZ: Just like, is there anything that your son wanted to do that was very

American that you didn't like?

POULOS: Well, not very much.

DIAZ: It sounds like he was a great boy, so I am thinking. . .

POULOS: It's good boy, not very much, no. That's the way, those years, you know, especially Jimmy's age, all the mothers, my friends come the time I come, two, three years different, but Jimmy, the other boys, girls they speak Greek because they come the same time after World War II and all the kids.

But Jimmy's kids they don't communicate with Greek language because they don't have far away, how can, when they come here, I have "Alexander, come on Demitria (phonetic) I can teach you, but you have to practice, you have to practice."

DIAZ: Hove they gone to Greece, the kids?

POULOS: Yes, we went to Greece.

DIAZ: You guys went to Greece?

POULOS: For trip, for fifteen days, twenty days, all you going to do?

DIAZ: You are not going to learn much.

POULOS: No you can't learn too much. We went the whole family, three four years ago, when Clinton, president Clinton goes in office, that time, that time, we went to Greece, but you can't learn Greek like that in one week, two weeks.

DIAZ: It's more of a vacation.

POULOS: Yes, uh-hum.

DIAZ: Unless they went to live in Greece for a little while.

POULOS: That's different.

DIAZ: Yes, it needs to be consistent.

POULOS: Uh-hum.

DIAZ: Yeah.

Did you experience any prejudice when you arrive to America? It sounds like you had such a nice community, you probably didn't but. . .

POULOS: Here?

DIAZ: Here.

POULOS: Open hands everyone.

DIAZ: Everyone?

POULOS: Everyone.

The church, the organization, the friends, you know my husband was years here, and we had nice, nice life, all my friends had good life, we all come that time. Before me, for instance, long time ago, the women's work, for instance, but they raise the kids, and those kids speak Greek now. They speak.

DIAZ: So, even though they work they were still able teach the kids Greek?

POULOS: Yeah, well they work to take care, some old ladies, they speak Greek in the house, and the kids grow up just like. . .

DIAZ: Wonderful.

How do you believe Sacramento Greek American community has changed in your lifetime that you have been here, like from the time you arrived until now, how has it changed? It has probably grown a lot. . .

POULOS: Grown a lot, and we have two more churches instead of one. Now we have one, and we have a little bit upside down, because some people likes the church we have right now, and somebody give lot 10 acres and then we bought and they pass and they are going to have another church now.

DIAZ: So, it has grown a lot.

POULOS: Grown a lot, yes.

DIAZ: But do you think it has stayed just as traditional as it was when you arrived?

POULOS: It is.

DIAZ: It is?

POULOS: Yes it is, church is a church and the priest we have right now is very nice. Of course, we had father Demitrio (phonetic) and (phonetic) and they both have beautiful voice and they can sing,

Today, I attend the church today and it was very nice we had church one and a half hour before 10 to 11 and then we have in the hall meeting and luncheon, fasting luncheon, because the Orthodox we have to fast for 40 days now, not to have meat, not to have eggs, no cheese, no nothing, because. . .

DIAZ: No pastries?

POULOS: Well, [laugh].

No pastries have butter.

DIAZ: Yeah, that's true. [Laugh]

POULOS: That's true, and no Tiropetalla (phonetic) because it has butter, and cheese and eggs and it was very nice. Our priest, our new priest is very nice, and we have beautiful choir, nice choir, we have the best choir here.

DIAZ: I was looking at the yearbook that your church had I guess published some years now when they had their anniversary. . .

POULOS: Which one, the 75th?

DIAZ: The 75th, yes

POULOS: I have that book.

DIAZ: It is very nice.

POULOS: Yeah, they have the first priest, father (phonetic) in the front page, we have a lot of priest, we have father (phonetic), father (phonetic) we have a lot of priest, they come and they send them somewhere else and. . .

DIAZ: Well, that's all my questions actually, that went so quick, it was just like a conversation.

POULOS: And it is all there?

DIAZ: It's all there. And then it goes into this tape recorder.